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MARYLAND

March 26, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Hagel:

As co-chairs of the Council of Governors (Council), we write to offer our sincere congratulations on your confirmation as the 24th Secretary of Defense. We look forward to working with you to build upon the strong partnership between the nation's governors, the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Homeland Security and the White House.

Since its inception, the Council has made great strides in improving state-federal collaboration on important issues affecting the safety and security of our citizens. The Council addressed long-standing concerns surrounding the need to ensure coordination between state and federal military forces during disaster response by developing the Dual Status Command arrangement, which became law and has proven extremely successful since its adoption.

More recently, the Council worked with DoD to establish a consultative process to ensure an ongoing dialogue regarding National Guard budget matters. For the first time, this agreement will capture states' National Guard requirements for inclusion in DoD's planning, analysis and budgeting procedures and ensure governors' representatives are included in DoD-wide domestic prevention and response planning and capability analysis activities. The budget consultative process was recently finalized and we look forward to working with DoD to implement this historic agreement.

The Council also recently agreed to take up cybersecurity issues and examine how the National Guard can serve as a critical cyber resource for both states and the federal government. We believe this new area of discussion will continue to build upon our successes working together to address issues impacting our national security.

Again, congratulations on your confirmation and we look forward to working with you as we continue to grow our state-federal partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Terry E. Branstad".

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Martin O'Malley".

Governor Martin O'Malley
Co-Chair
Council of Governors